



NORTH AMERICAN
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

MIDWESTERN AREA NEWSLETTER

May 2023



I invite you to submit material for inclusion in future newsletters, but keep your information concise, to the point, and use "links" if you want to provide the reader with access to "long readings". – Jess Abbott, Midwestern Area Assistant to the Bishop (AAB), 513-314-2028, midwesternaab@thenalc.org

Latest and Greatest News!

Ohio Mission Region Having an NALC Faith Formation Festival May 5-6

The OMR Convocation includes all five Ohio Mission Districts. This year the Heartland Mission District will join in also, especially since workshops and guest speakers will be added to convocation activities. See the brochure and registration page at the end of this newsletter for more information. All are welcome if you'd like to take advantage of this educational opportunity in our Midwestern Area of the NALC.

Celebrating Pastors

The NALC Executive Council is please to inform us that they have approved as an NALC pastor:

The Rev Jeremy Winter (Elizabeth)

2687 Kingbird Ave

Boyden, IA 51234-8000

C: 712-389-2747

jwinter001@gmail.com

Ministry: Congregation Pastor

Good Shepherd, Manistee, Michigan.

Welcomes Pastor Tim Hubert as new interim pastor starting May 1.

Midwestern Area Disaster Response

25,000 homes were flooded on July 28, 2022 when 14" rain poured down for 12 hours and 39 people were killed. Perry County is where Hazard, KY is located and we delivered 6 box truck-loads of emergency relief supplies to County Line Community Church in Chavies KY

right after the flood occurred. Since that time, County Line Community Church and Gospel Light Baptist Church are hosting our volunteers



throughout the year. Pastor Mike Koch is organizing a mission trip to County Line Community Church, arriving on Sunday June 11 and departing Thursday

June 15. The volunteer team needs to bring their own air mattresses, bedding, towels/toiletries, and they will do their cooking - you might want to talk with Pastor Mike for information on these areas. His cell number is 330-635-8008. His e-mail:

mekoch46@gmail.com

NALC Disaster Response will provide the projects of home repair and the materials to complete the work. You will need to bring your own tools. Feel free to call Mary Bates, NALC Disaster Response Coordinator, for any project information, 740-509-1132.

Public Reading of the New Testament (Great Idea!)

On March 10, 2023, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Rochester, MN, hosted its 8th Annual Public Reading of the entire New Testament. They started at 6 am and ended close to 10:30 pm. About twenty people came and went throughout the day and evening. Members took turns with continuous reading of the New Testament, sitting in the sanctuary listening or having a cup of coffee and treats in the narthex. When they got to the last chapter in Revelation, they decided have the reader stop right before the last 2 verses of Revelation. They all joined in a circle with their Bibles at the front of the church and read the last two verses of Revelation in unison making for a very "holy moment!"

* * *

"This is my rifle,
there are many
like it, but this
one is mine!"



Menagerie Thoughts of Jess...

This is the first line of the infantryman's creed that I've heard many times from those in basic training. The reason I bring it up, believe it or not, has to do with my Bible.

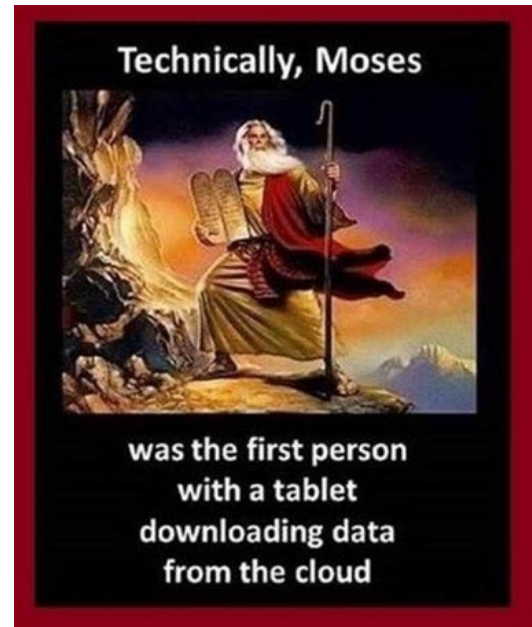
In my years as a pastor, I've tried to emphasize with people "ownership" of the Bible. "This is my Bible, there are many like it, but this one is mine!" Bible "ownership" may seem like a weird phrase, but let me explain. A long time ago I realized that one important aspect of my calling was to facilitate the process of getting people to move from shelf-ownership of the Bible to heart-ownership of the Bible. It is a movement away from seeing the Bible as foreign, overly complex, and dryly historical, to seeing the Bible as a source for devotion, fellowship, and spirit-filled direction. I have two Bibles on my desk that perhaps demonstrate the difference. One is quite good looking; gold edged thin pages (the kind cowboys in the old western movies used to use to roll cigarettes with when they were out of paper). My "beautiful" Bible is for looks. It has a floppy cover, so it looks like a preacher's Bible that bounces in your hand when you really "get to preach-in". My other Bible is "Ole Faithful." It has thick pages so the highlighting doesn't bleed through, and lots of handwritten notes in the margins from years of asking its verses questions. Ole Faithful is the one I "really own." I don't have to carry Ole Faithful around though, it goes with me in my head, and that's what I mean by "owning" it.

I've seen a bit of this owning process in Bible studies with people. Our Bibles sometimes drive us to evaluate what we are doing when we say we "worship." Or, our Bibles can tell us what "wisdom" is and how to get more of it. The list goes on, but perhaps the greatest thing the Bible drives us to is to study it together. It draws us together into a fellowship of Bible owners! The Bible also sends us out from our

fellowship and its message is meant to appear in our minds at just the right time to give us comfort and direction in life. That's exactly when we "own" the Bible, otherwise it's just so much fanciful literature.

I hope you have an "Ole Faithful" and that with the Holy Spirit, it is guiding and inspiring you to bear the hope and the mission we have in Jesus.

—*Jess*



Seminarians in the Midwestern Area

Michelle Kouse, North American Lutheran Seminary network (NALS) / Fuller Seminary, M.Div program. SW Ohio MD.

Rochelle Lemieux, St. Paul Lutheran Seminary, working on Pastoral Care certification. Heartland MD

Terese Whitten, Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT), Interning in North Carolina. Michigan MD

Pam Grandmaison, Trinity School for Ministry (NALS), Ambridge PA, Ordination Under Special Circumstances program. Michigan MD

Heidi Yahl, ILT, Pastoral Ministry certification, NE Ohio MD

Christian White, ILT, Pastoral Ministry certification, NE Ohio MD

If you know of any seminarians in the Midwestern Area not listed here, please email them to Jess with school, degree / certification being sought, and their Mission District.

Youth Opportunities

June 11-14 Lutheran Disaster Response Camp for youth in eastern Kentucky. Info: MEKoch46@gmail.com

June 22-25 “**The Call**” is a retreat to be held at the North American Lutheran Seminary Center in Ambridge, PA. Learn more at <https://www.tsm.edu/thecall/>.

July 16-22 NEXUS Institute, a week-long event for high schoolers, will be held at Grand View University, Des Moines, Iowa from July 16-22, 2023. Learn more at <https://www.grandview.edu/about/community/amps-clinics/nexus>.

July 1-4, 2024 **NALC Continental Youth Gathering**, Boerne, TX (near San Antonio)

Resources for Congregations Without Pastors

Online Confirmation Program - contact the Southern Area Assistant to the Bishop, Pastor Mark Braaten, 903-316-1594 mbraaten@oslctyler.org

Sermons for Lay Leaders to Deliver at Worship Services

Iowa Mission District sermon library www.iowamissiondistrict.com or contact Pastor Burkhalter at pgburkhalter52@hotmail.com

Pastor David Wendel posts sermons on YouTube https://youtu.be/gCcD_lvwCbA, he also posts them on his Facebook page and the NALC Fellowship group; or contact Pastor Wendel at dwendel@thenalc.org

Luther Week 2023, Oklahoma City

August 7-11, 2023. Don't know about you, but I'm looking forward to an “in person” week of fellowship, learning, and convocation after our stretch of Zoom meetings. See developing

details and registration process on the NALC website.

There will be a unique table at convocation this year. Chaplain (Major) Walter McCall (U.S. Army chaplain recruiter) will be available August 9-10. I know many of us are too old to join up, but Chaplain McCall likes to talk to all, just to inform pastors of this important ministry.

Congregation Vacancies

The NALC website has a great section to see congregations looking for a full-time or part-time pastor <https://thenalc.org/call-process/>

Newsletter Distribution List

If you know someone who would like to receive this newsletter regularly, please provide name and email address. It will only be emailed, and they will be Blind copied (Bcc).

Midwestern AAB Schedule Contact me if you'd like me to suggest some short presentations I can make at event. For convocations, I can provide a short update on NALC priorities and recent efforts.

The following events are on my radar to attend:

6 May 2023 – Ohio Mission Region Convocation, Grace, Westerville, OH (includes convocations of all five Ohio Mission Districts and Heartland (IN and KY) Mission Districts
Aug 7-11, 2023 - Luther Week 2023, Oklahoma City
Sep 16, 2023 - Iowa Mission District Convocation—Faith, Monona, IA
Oct 14, 2023 – Michigan Mission District Convocation, St. Thomas, Trufant, MI
Oct 28, 2023 – WI-UP Mission District Convocation TBD
Oct 31-Nov 2, 2023 – Bishop & Deans meeting TBD
Jan 16-18, 2024 – Pastors Conference, Drury Plaza, Disney Springs, Orlando, FL

Prospective Specialized Ministries & Military Chaplains

If a seminarian or pastor asks you about the possibility of serving as a military chaplain (Active Duty, Reserve or National Guard), Civil Air Patrol Chaplain, Hospital / Hospice

chaplain, or fire, police, para-church minister; direct them for assistance to Jess Abbott at militaryendorser@thenalc.org Jess is the NALC's official Military Endorsing Agent for all NALC clergy currently servicing or seeking to serve in the U.S. or Canadian Military. See the "Our Work" tab in the NALC website for more information; <https://thenalc.org/specialized-and-military-ministries/>

Midwestern Area Deans

Pr. Jess Abbott, Midwestern Assistant to the Bishop
513-314-2028, midwesternaab@thenalc.org

Pr. Bert Schultz, OH Mission Region & NW Ohio MD
715-418-1037, jcgracepastor@outlook.com

Pr. Paul Schultz, OH South West Mission District
937-594-1612, fasterpastor48@gmail.com

Pr. Scott Smith, OH South East MD (co-dean)
740-603-2150, prscottsmith@gmail.com

Pr. Tom Jacobson, OH South East MD (co-dean)
740-242-2192, pastor@gracethornville.org

Pr. Michael Koch, OH North East Mission District
330-635-8008, mekoch46@gmail.com

Pr. Diana Seaman, OH North Central Mission District
567-241-8494, pastordiana1054@gmail.com

Pr. Christopher Staley, IOWA Mission District
515-357-9052, cbstaley@netins.net
www.iowamissiondistrict.com

Pr. Jess Abbott, MI (lower peninsula) Mission District
513-314-2028, midwesternaab@thenalc.org

Pr. Doug Gast, Heartland (IN-KY) Mission District
317-727-0612, dqast1950@gmail.com

Pr. Mark Knappe, WI & MI Upper Peninsula MD (co-dean)
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